

This is an interview with Mr. B.H. Stringham by Mike Brown of the Golden Age Center on the tenth of August 1976 at the Stringham residence, 209 East 100 North Vernal, Utah.

Mike Brown [MB]: Maybe you can tell me a little bit about yourself and about your family. Did you know your grandparents?

Briant Stringham [Bry]: Yes, I knew my grandmother. My grandfather died when he was a young man of fifty-four. Ferrying sheep across from Antelope Island to Black Rock, he got himself very wet and did not change clothes when he got home and got pneumonia. In those days pneumonia meant death, really, in these early days, you know, and no cure for it, like they have now.

MB: You were saying your family was one of the first to come here. How did they manage to come here? You said they were with Brigham Young.

Bry: The Stringhams were the first to come into Utah in Salt Lake Valley. My grandfather, Briant Stringham, that's my name, came with Brigham Young, he was one of Brigham Young's helpers, a young man of twenty-four. So, Brigham Young had him along as one of the young fellows to scout for him and so on. He came down the canyon with Brigham Young on July 24, [18]47. Then he was put in charge of the livestock soon after.

Brigham Young called him into the bowery, after they got the bowery built, and said, "Briant, you are a young man in this family. This Ashby family needs help, the father died back a ways and it's a big family, and your mission is to take care of this family." So he did. He married three of them right there, soon after. He was a polygamist, of course; he married three sisters.

How my father came into this country was the fact that my mother had a sister that came in one of the very first with the Snyders. The Snyders brought cattle in here from Heber country, Snyderville. Snyderville's named after this family. She was a young girl helping the woman with her family, Mrs. Snyder, with her family. When she got here, she met a young man by the name of Westover and they were married. They had a child who was the second child born in Ashley Valley, white child, and his name was Clare Westover. But during the birth, or soon after, she died of poisoning, no doctors, no nothing.

So, when my mother and father got word of it, which took weeks in those days sometimes, that she had died, Father then was with his father, taking his father's place on the island taking care of livestock. In fact, his father was alive then, my father's father. So, my father rounded up the horses, it was a great horse area, Antelope Island. He rounded up a bunch of horses, of four wild ones partly broken, and hooked them up and brought my mother and two children, two daughters, out here to pick up this child of my aunt's. They were two weeks getting here with wild horses. They had to go very slow, the roads were terrible, crooked, rocky, just old roads. An Indian nursed this child while my mother was coming. When she got here, they went immediately back to Salt Lake. After Father looked around a little while and he liked the country so well, in a short time he came back and homesteaded it, up on the upper end of the valley.

The reason he homesteaded the upper end of the valley is, some friend he knew very well, and liked very well, had a lot of experience said, "Phil," that was my father's name, "when you locate your homestead, you locate it up at the head of the waters." And that's why he is up

near Ashley Creek Canyon, that's the old Stringham homestead, under 160 acre homestead. The log cabin Father built was gone, but he built later a wonderful brick house, and the brick were made right there on the ranch. And the house is still standing, very nice-looking house. Brick were made for other people there surrounding, about five different houses, brick was made on the Stringham farm.

MB: Is that where you grew up?

Bry: That's where I grew up. That's where I learned to work, if I did learn. A farmer boy learns to work, learns how to work. That's the value of a farm.

MB: Did your father have any other business or was he into livestock?

Bry: My father was a farmer for many years. He went into cattle at first, on a small scale, but the cattle thieves were so prevalent, sly and vicious, that they would steal the cattle and take them out of the country. So he went into the sheep business, traded the cattle for sheep, on a small scale, went into the sheep business, which were watched daily. From there, he developed quite a large herd. My brother Phil, who was older, went in with him and the two of them had 3,000 head at the time they turned them over to my brother and myself, on a lease basis, after we were married, both of us. It was there I started my sheep life.

MB: About when was that?

Bry: That was in 1916 when they turned the sheep over to Ray and I, my brother.

MB: You said you had trouble with cattle thieves. Were they, like, outlaws from Brown's Park that would come over and steal your cattle, or were they just people passing through?

Bry: They were outlaws from the Brown's Park area. That's how they made their living.

MB: Was there a lot of that going on?

Bry: There was a lot of it going on. You had to watch carefully or you would lose your stock.

MB: What are your earliest impressions or memories of the farm or growing up in Vernal?

Bry: My earliest impressions on the farm up in Maeser was this experience. One of my earliest experiences was that we all had to work hard, we had very little pleasure, I mean what's pleasures nowadays. We went over to our neighbors'. That was a great pleasure if they had kids.

One of my earliest experiences: when I was about eight years old, my father had a bellows, a bellows of his own, you know. He was sort of a half blacksmith. He had to do, most of the men had to do, their own work on their farm machinery. Father was working at this shop, a little shanty, and I can see him now pumping this thing. I went in, school was on, and I said, "Father, can I go to school today?" And he said, "No, you can't. You have to help on the farm." I went away bawling, and as a result, I did not go to school until I was nine years old, because I

was needed so badly on the farm. School periods were short then, in the winter, you know. So I didn't go until I was nine. Father needed me. He had a big family, eleven of us all total. He needed all the help he could to get us all by.

MB: What do you remember about your school years, what was going to school like?

Bry: Going to school was like walking a mile and a half, two miles, a little over two miles to school, later on, riding a pony about three miles. When I got up to about the sixth, seventh grade, I guess eighth grade, I rode about three miles on ponies. One time I was riding on the way to school and the schoolhouses were opposite each other. One was in one part of town, the higher grades, and the lower grades were in the south part of the town, and it was late and the bell was ringing. I was riding this horse as hard as I could to get there and in the school before roll was called. A group of larger boys coming from the other direction were riding fast, as hard as they could ride, and we met and our horses' heads hit and I went off and was unconscious for quite a while. That was one of my unusual experiences in the history, of course, but that showed we at least had hardships with ponies and so on.

MB: When you did have time for recreation? What did you do?

Bry: The greatest recreation of my boyhood days was when we would go to Father and ask him, "Father, if we work hard today, can we walk over to the neighbors?" To the corner, three-quarters of a mile away where two of my friends lived. "Can I go over there this evening and stay until dark?" That was the greatest pleasure I had in those days, was just going over and visiting with them.

MB: Who were they?

Bry: They were Delbert Colton, George Colton was my friend, and Vern Hansen, they lived on opposite corners. Ray and I, my brother, would go over there and we'd play until dark, and, gee, it was a great pleasure. No picture shows, no nothing, you know, no ball games, no nothing.

MB: Did you get into any mischief or trouble?

Bry: No, not as a lad, but I got into plenty later on.

MB: Tell me about that.

Bry: One experience I had after I got to be about sixteen, the smart-aleck age. I had a friend named Woody Moore, who lived a mile and a half from me. His uncle, George Wilson, owned a race horse and my brother, Phil, had a race horse. So, one night we got together, and now I am about sixteen years old, and we decided we would go out shooting dogs. That was a pastime then at night. Ride around and yell and the dogs would come out and we would shoot them. We never shot any, we would shoot *at* them. Anyhow, we got this six-shooter from George Searle.

George furnished the materials for the soldiers of the fort. He had a cellar [where] he kept guns and all sorts of canned goods, books and so on. They lived right across the road from this

Woody Moore and he knew all about it. So we went in there and I got a .38 six-shooter and a box of shells and went up to his uncle's, George Wilson's, who lived one half a mile away, and stole the mare. I was on my race horse, Punk we called him. We called the other one Minnie, a mare that I used to ride in races for George Wilson. He paid me two bits a race whether I won or not. I never did win one, but I come awful close.

Well, we got on our horses, of course it was night, and rode around the country shooting at dogs. We would take turns shooting. We'd pass the six-shooter back and forth to each other as we rode along. So, we decided to come down town and shoot the town up. We were on the two fastest horses in the valley and we knew it. We knew we couldn't get caught by horsemen, no cars, you know, and no lights. I mean, just dim gas lights and lanterns and so on up Main Street.

So, we rode down to about where the 7-11 Café is now, and there was a café there then. Harry Woods was running the café then. We swung our horses just like we were in a race, rode down and swung them. It was my turn to shoot, so I shot six times as we went through town and passed it over to [Woody]. By the time we were to what we called the Red Planter, he had shot twice. We just kept on a going, went on shooting dogs and that's all there was to it. We never got caught, but Uncle George knew the little mare had been taken out 'cause she was all sweat. He knew pretty well who took it. He got us both together and we finally confessed to taking the mare.

MB: Did he do anything to you?

Bry: He chastised us a little, nothing serious.

MB: I take it horse racing was quite a sport then?

Bry: Yes, it was.

MB: Did they have any organized races or anything like that?

Bry: No, no organized races at that time.

MB: What was the town like then? I imagine it was quite a bit different than what it is now.

Bry: Yes it was quite a bit different then, no pavement, no electric lights and the horse races were right by this home here. One of the racetracks, see this is quite a level, beautiful place here. They started down at Fifth East and run up past here. Had a lot of great races then, with the Indians. The Indians had a lot of race horses then. Lots of bets made, the men bet their boots, or their horses, anything they had, very little cash in those days.

MB: Did many of the Indians live right here in town or did they live out of town and have to come in?

Bry: No, they didn't live in town at all, they lived on the reservation. No Indians. In fact very few Indians have ever lived here. Occasionally, a family comes over, but usually they don't stay long. Years or so ago, they used to patronize our beer parlors pretty heavy, but you see very few now

in Vernal, over around Roosevelt, Duchesne and Whiterocks.

MB: What was it like in the sheep business when you first got started?

Bry: When I first got started, on this lease that we took from my father, we then paid thirty and forty dollars a month for a herder. Now it's seven hundred. But men were reliable then. They'd go out and stay sometimes for a full year without coming in. Then, the law was not restrictive. You could leave a man alone any amount of time, now you can't. You're supposed to have two at camp and not leave a man alone like it was then because no cars. Sometimes a man would be up there a month and not see anybody, you know, up in the hills.

You paid the men then thirty dollars a month—with prunes. If you furnished prunes, they only got thirty dollars a month. If they didn't demand prunes, they got thirty-five a month. So, that might be a partial joke, but that was the story. As you see, wages were very low. But then, these men were strange herders in those days. They'd come in, even though they'd been out a year some of them. In a week they'd be broke. We had five saloons here in that day, here in Vernal. Many more saloons than there was grocery stores. What upheld them a great deal was the soldiers over in Fort Duchesne. There was a group of soldiers over at Fort Duchesne to protect us from the Indians. A company of soldiers. They were quite good patrons for these saloons and so on.

It was quite an exciting place at that time, for a little place, isolated, clear off in the world, a hundred and twenty-five miles in any direction for a railroad, you know, that's quite an isolation. You can go any direction, east, west, north or south and in a hundred and twenty-five miles you're to a railroad. The joke is that Vernal is the biggest city in the world that's as far away from the railroad as it is because you can't get any farther, because if you get farther, you get closer. Because it's right in the center, see.

MB: Did you go up on the mountain and stay, yourself?

Bry: Yes, I stayed. Until I got a start, I stayed pretty well out with the sheep. You had to to get started. I started from scratch. But finally, you gain and get a pretty good set-up and then you're just the boss. You're the boss and you don't ever herd anymore after you get a start.

MB: What part of the country did you have your herd in?

Bry: Well, I started, wintered, just west of the valley. Everybody started out here because it's close. West of the valley here, that's winter range. Then for spring and fall, we went on Diamond Mountain. My father had a little holding there that we leased from him. Then, as time went on, you can see this is a poor place to be because it's so over-grazed. I kept reaching out and I bought my brother out after a year and a half. So then I went out across Green River, out in that area, and eventually went on into Colorado, before it was sheep country, into the cow country. I've got a homestead there. I homesteaded twenty acres right on US Highway 40, Willow Creek, they called it, about twenty miles over east...

MB: Is that past Dinosaur?

Bry: About two or three miles east of Dinosaur. I immediately run into trouble with cow men. But I had this land and I had a little water there and the other men were crossing there some. Finally, I got a warning, said I better get out of there, the cow men, and I kept staying though. Another herd owned by Snell Johnson, we went on out, nearly to Skull Creek.

One night, it was 1918, I went out, had cars then, I went out to camp and stayed all night, just south of the highway about a mile, so I decided to come back the next morning. I looked across the flats and I could see somebody coming, afoot, so I waited until he got over to the car, and he said, "Cowboys came last night. They tied Bill Mann and I..." And he's still here in town, Bill Mann, he was alive then, "...up to a cedar, took the coal oil and threw it over our wagon. It splattered over the wagon." Then we always carried five-gallon cans of coal oil for our lanterns. "Then they took the sheep and drove them off, and beat them with clubs and shot them, killed three hundred of them." And they said, "By God, you tell that Stringham," sorry I shouldn't have said that, "tell that Stringham he better get out of here or he will get the same dose."

But I never did get out, I stayed. I had land out there, land on Bitter Creek and Stinkin' Waters, out in the Rangely oilfield, in that area. So, I had a hired fellow by the name of John Durnell. He is a great big, fine fellow and he knew most of those cowboys. He had a big silver mounted pistol, a .44. So, I told him the cowboys had sent and got me word that, "We're coming tonight." So, I went down to his camp, down there in the oilfield, drove down and told him, "They're coming tonight. We've been told they're coming." So, he said, "You send the sons-of-bitches to me. I'll take care of them." He was a pretty brave boy. Well, they didn't come, anyhow, that night.

I got ahead of my story. There were seven of them in this first affair. They went across the front of the camp where I was sleeping, just this close. You could tell how many there was from the horse tracks and the mud. It was February. Well, we went on. I stayed there then three years, threatened all the time. The Federal Division of Investigation said, "Now, as long as they threaten you, we'll give you credit for living on this homestead." I never lived on it a day and they gave me a deed because it went on three years, the threats.

Now, coming back to the story, then John Durnell, after lambing, he came with me as far as Jensen, Utah. And he said, "Bry, I believe I'll go back. I'll go back to my wife." He married one of the dry farmer's daughters and they had a baby. So, he went back, and a fellow by the name of Bascom, Neil Bascom, hired him then to take a bunch of sheep up on Blue Mountain, to Elk Horn, and that's right in the middle of cattle, and that's in the spring/fall range, and in the summer range. And, by God, they didn't like it. And I don't blame them, really!

But anyhow, they came in the night and he had his father-in-law as his camp mover, named Price, old man Price, a big old Dane and he'd sent him down that day, after they got on top of the sheep, after supplies, and while he was gone, John told him, two men came to the camp on two unbranded buckskin horses. See, John would particularly notice a brand on a horse because he was a cowboy at one time and they weren't branded. So, they told him, "Now you get out of here with these sheep and we want you to get out now." And John said, "No, I'm not going to go." He was brave. He was too brave.

Well, anyhow. They said, "We'll just give you five days to get out of here." And John said, "I'm not going to get out of here." See, he was telling his daddy-in-law, Price, he was telling Price afterwards. Well, they came that night as they did before and the sheep started rassling around, the bells ringing, and he got up and they shot him right there in the belly button with a .30-30. Of course, that knocked him right down there. He called to his father-in-law and

said, "Give me a drink of water and go for help." See, you immediately get thirsty when you start to lose blood.

So, he went down and notified the Moffat County people that this happened. They wouldn't come. The sheriff wouldn't come from Moffat County, Colorado, so we had to send our sheriff up to get the body. Sheriff Lafe Richardson went up to get the body. It went on and on. They couldn't get the officials or anybody in Moffat County to do anything, wouldn't do a thing, so the federals investigated it from the standpoint of intimidating dry farmers. This Price was a dry farmer, see.

So, we took these seven men to Grand Junction to try them. It was years after the thing happened. We were there three weeks for the trial and they were all convicted for a year and a day. They couldn't pin on who had pulled the trigger. We knew who it was, but that didn't convince other people. Skull Creek Jones was who we suspicioned had pulled the trigger. He lived at Skull Creek around.

But anyhow, one of them was a farmer boy. I won't tell you his name, but neither one of them served a minute. They just went free. And that's the last man killed in the sheep-cattle battles that went on so long. There were many of them killed, you know, but this John Durnell was the last one.

MB: Was that really widespread back then, the sheep and cattle range wars?

Bry: Oh, no, there was just this one instance that was this severe. Anyhow, I sold the homestead for a thousand dollars. I'm getting ahead of my story. I stayed in there and just kept staying, even after this, another three years. One day the county sheriff and three county commissioners came to my camp, we were lambing. They said, "We've passed a law in Moffat County whereby we allow no sheep whatever in the county."

Of course, I knew that was ridiculous. I said, "Well, I can't move now, I'm lambing. You can't move when you're lambing, because you've got little lambs." I said, "I'm near the end of lambing, but I probably can get out in ten days." And they said, "All right, we'll give you ten days."

Well, the next day, the same group from Routt County called on me. See, I was lambing in both counties. "You have to get out of here. We've passed a law whereby there will be no sheep in Routt County." Same story as the others. And I told them the same thing: "I can't go now. It would be suicide." "Well, we'll give you ten days." I said okay.

I moved out and never went back. Then I sold this homestead for a thousand dollars and that was the end of Colorado. But it wasn't but a few years until it was wide open to everybody. Cattlemen went broke, a lot of them. The banks in Craig were glad to have the sheep come in because they weren't making money.

MB: Were a lot of your herders foreigners? I've heard about Basque sheepherders.

Bry: Quite a few of our herders were Mexicans. I never hired them. I hired them once or twice, but they weren't at all satisfactory. It was hard to explain to them. Basques, yes, a few Basques, in the Colorado herds. They're the best. They are the top herders. But we used white men most of the time. I did all throughout my career. Tried to get the best of them; it got so you couldn't rely on them at all. They had to come in every other night, it seemed, instead of staying out. Mostly white people in this area, and some Mexicans.

MB: Did you go over in the Brown's Park area? Echo Park, Island Park, in that area a lot when you were a young man? Did you know people over there?

Bry: No, I had no connections over there at all. In the sheep business, we were just kind of above Brown's Park, just off of the Green. I've been there many times, but just on trips.

MB: Did you ever have run-ins with outlaws or ever run across them when you were out on the mountain?

Bry: No, I didn't have a run-in with an outlaw. I had one, when I traveled out in Colorado there, around the point of the mountain, Dinosaur, in that area. I always had a six-shooter on the seat of my car when I was driving. One day a cowboy come riding up to me, put his head in the car and saw that six-shooter, so we had quite a friendly conversation. I probably wouldn't have used it. He probably could have out-triggered me anyway. But then I felt safer with something, because they were threatening me all the time.

MB: Did the Dust Bowl and Depression, those years, how did that affect you and your business?

Bry: Well, prices were down and so was the range down. It was a terrible time. Nearly got us all. A few of us survived and got out of it all right. You're talking about along in the '30s, are you? Prices were clear down, terrible. Then we made mistakes, too. For instance, I was offered sixty-five cents for my wool at one time and that was a terrific price then, see. The wool buyer said, "I advise you not to take it. Just borrow the money. It's going to go higher." So I said, "Okay." But two years after, I sold the same wool for thirteen cents. Then I had to pay back what I had borrowed. So, errors were made as we went along, you know. But all you had to do, and I always preach this: just stay with them. Just stay with them and they'll bring you out. That's the way it went all the time. It turned out to be very profitable in the end.

MB: How long did those hard times last?

Bry: Well, there was about four years of it that was terrible to get along, pillar to post and tougher than the dickens, discouraging. As I say, you could see that if you just stick with this, they'll bring you out of it. These little biddies, if you treat them right, they are much better than cattle in a depression because they have two crops, you see, the wool and the lamb. The lamb is the big payer, it pays much more money than the wool.

MB: During those times, there was a drought here I understand.

Bry: That's right.

MB: Did the drought hit harder than the economic problems, like the banks failing and things like that?

Bry: It was not a great problem. We got by pretty well with the drought.

MB: You still had enough range and water?

Bry: Yes. We got by pretty well that way. The bad year, 1919, when we lost so many sheep, I was in Colorado where feed was much better. I got by pretty well by only feeding one herd. Most of them had to feed everything. High price. I had a ranch, had a little hay on it and I got by very well. But that was our toughest year, 1919-1920. The winter started on Thanksgiving Day and never let up until May. Terrific winter. But one herd I didn't feed at all. I just turned them loose and let them go. They fought their way through pretty well, by turning them loose.

MB: Have you had other rough winters that compare to that one?

Bry: Yeah. '45 was a rough winter. We had to ship hay in. I fed that winter for a short time. You asked me where I ran. I kept running farther out and farther out until I got clear out in the Watson area, where the feed is excellent. It's the greatest range, I think, in the West, and I think I know the West because I've gone to BLM, boards, for thirty years and I've been all over the west as a board member. The greatest range I ever was on was out there in the Watson area, about fifty miles, seventy miles from here. I ran all of my life out there. I shouldn't say all my life, but the biggest part of my sheep experience has been out in that area.

I had about twelve thousands acres out there, shale, that's right in the heart of this range. I never had to feed but this one year, in 1919. You asked me was there any other hard years. We had to feed that year because it just snowed us clear in, we couldn't move the sheep. I shouldn't say 1919. 1919 was in Colorado. I'm out of Colorado. You asked me was there any other hard years besides that 1919. 1948 and '49 was the hard one. That's when we fed; everybody fed. But fortunately, the winter didn't last long. We shipped hay in from Kansas that was really just rot, rats and rot, but it saved them, with a little corn. They'd eat that, you know, they loved corn. They consumed all the hay in this country. And we paid forty-five and fifty-five dollars a ton for that. That was a terrific price then, you know.

MB: What was the going rate just during normal times?

Bry: Oh, five to six dollars a ton. It was three dollars a ton at one time, I remember.

MB: Prices have sure jumped since then, haven't they? What was transportation like? When did the cars come in?

Bry: Transportation of livestock?

MB: Well, you mentioned you had a car in the early days. Did you have one of the first cars in the area?

Bry: Yes, I presume so. When I came in to take over the sheep, that was in 1916, I told you, I'd come from Stores. I was principal of the school in Stores for three years there, and the last year I run a little taxi service from Stores to Helper. I had two Ford cars. I've got one of them with me. Then as soon as they used cars to run around the herds, I had a little pickup, a sort of a little

pickup, a coupe, and you make a little box in the back, just like a pickup, and that's what I used. It was many years until we got to the real pickups.

MB: You mentioned transportation of livestock.

Bry: We originally trailed them by foot. That is, we'd have a wagon go along, single-bed wagon with supplies, and we'd walk and drive, take turns. Two of us would go transporting our lambs from here to Watson at first. My first experience was to go to Dragon, you know what I'm talking about, Dragon? It had a narrow-gauge railroad that came over from Mack. It went to Dragon.

We'd trail them from Diamond Mountain to Dragon. That's what? About a hundred miles. We'd go along with this team and camp every night. We'd usually have to night herd them, lambs, you know, just go like this. Had to keep them right in a tight bunch. Away from their mothers they just wouldn't pay any attention to which direction they were going. Could be hard to handle. Good dog, one man driving, and we'd take turns driving the team.

We'd load them there on the narrow gauge and send them over. We usually always contacted somebody and they'd meet us there.

MB: How long a journey was that?

Bry: That took about twelve days. Then sometimes we'd go the other way to Green River, Wyoming, and trail them that way, over what is now the Manila Highway. The road was generally good, except we'd go right down to Brown's Park, and cross from there on the ferry, go through Jesse Ewing Canyon, and on over to Green River.

Then the truck came along and we'd truck them. We'd put them in decks, in layers, just like sardines. As we'd put them in, we'd pull their legs and lay them down, see, and just pack them in there like sardines. It was a terrific hard job to lift them up onto the top deck, pull their legs, and put them back in there. We don't haul them anymore that way. Truckers made a business of it, we didn't do that ourselves, truckers did it.

MB: Did you have to load them yourselves?

Bry: No, they'd load them.

MB: You mentioned a ferry at Brown's Park. Who did that?

Bry: Jarvie, it was called Jarvie, the ferry. It was Jarvie. He later disappeared. He made quite a fortune there and they figured they just put him in the river.

MB: How many sheep would you be able to take across. How did you do that? It seems like that would really be an operation.

Bry: It is quite an operation. You just had a little frame up so they wouldn't jump over, and just take a little bunch at a time. Had a man on the other side to hold them while you got them all across. It was a terrific job to get across.

MB: It seems like that would take a long time.

Bry: It would take a long time, that's right. If you had a couple of thousand sheep, a couple thousand lambs, they were usually in that size bunch, a thousand to two thousand, we combined, you know, combined our lambs. It was a big job, but that was the way of the day.

MB: What would you have to pay for that service?

Bry: You mean the crossing? Oh, so much a head. Oh, probably, just very nominal, a penny a head maybe. I've forgotten just exactly.

MB: Have you had other business interests here in Vernal besides sheep? You said you were with the BLM for a long time.

Bry: Well, I was on the original board of the BLM. Then I was on the state board, grazing state board. Then I was on the national. I was on all three all the time for about thirty years.

MB: When did they start that in this country?

Bry: 1935. It's still intact now, but the grazing board is watered down for other interests. It's not near as effective for the stockmen now as it was. All other interests, such wildlife, environmentalists of all sorts, commissioners.

MB: What was its original purpose?

Bry: The original purpose was to set up the range. The range then was open to everybody. In fact, we were overgrazing it so badly, the stockmen asked to be controlled. See, we had the ? as an example, which we didn't like at all, but it was so much better than what we were doing. We were just ruining it because nomads were in here and anybody could get into the business. Our range was gone to pot. In fact, it wouldn't be there now if we hadn't've done something. So, we asked the government to set up an organization. We call it the BLM now, of course, Bureau of Land Management. I think it was in 1935.

By the way, on the side, we just, Bob Nielson and I, he was one of the first men that came in here to set up the range, to evaluate the range and our holdings and the range, he and I and our wives went to Hayden the day before yesterday to visit. Ferry Carpenter was the first director of grazing. He's still alive, he's ninety-one years old, and a most unusual character. He was the one that set the thing up nationally, from Washington there. He has a cow outfit here in Hayden and he's had one there all his life, a beautiful set-up. He has twelve hundred acres with beautiful pasture land, raises Hereford cattle, and he told us so many interesting stories.

I was president of the Knife and Fork here one time and had him come in and talk to the Knife and Fork, he was that caliber. He was telling us how the business had changed, He raised purebreds and sold bulls and he said, "I used to just sell the bull, now I rent them." He said, "I rented one bull for two months for four thousand dollars." That's a pretty good charge.

MB: Boy, that is good. Just for renting a bull.

Bry: Yeah. An Idaho man.

MB: Did you do a lot of hunting during your lifetime?

Bry: No, I'm not a hunter. I've done very little hunting. In fact, I think I've only killed two deer in my life. But I do love to hunt sage chickens. I used to love to hunt pheasants, but they fly too fast for me now, because I'm eighty-eight years old. I can't hit them anymore.

MB: Did you go up in the High Uintas for recreation much or to fish?

Bry: As a lad, yes. I used to go there very often with my father and my brothers. I loved fishing, trout spring fishing especially. I spent many a happy hour up there. Running sheep up in there, too, we did a lot of fishing that way. We run three herds up in there. One herd up at King's Peak, the highest peak in Utah, you know. Then I had two herds down right on the Manila Highway, east of the Manila highway, in that area there that's fenced now, fenced completely for sheep. But cattle are there now because sheep are gone from the country practically. We have very few sheep here now. There was at one time on the records here in Uintah County, two hundred thousand head was assessed. And now's there's, I'd say, not more than twenty thousand, maybe a few more than that. And probably that's low because there are quite a few farm flocks.

MB: Is the range still in pretty good shape from what it was?

Bry: The range is in much better shape than it's been in in my lifetime. It's come back since the Bureau of Land Management took it over. It's come back because they restricted us, which we asked to be. Did away with all the nomads, you now, Greeks and so on. I don't want to say anything derogatory about Greeks, but they'd come in without any land base at all, you know. Had no center or set-up.

MB: Was that legal?

Bry: It was legal then. You didn't have to have a permit, you could just go anyplace. You can't anymore. We got so thick, it was awful. We'd even move camp in the night if we thought another guy was going to go over here close to us. After dark, we'd just move camp over there, and he'd see us next morning and say, "Look at that son-of-a-gun up there, that's where I was going to move!" There was quite a battle.

MB: A lot of competition then.

Bry: Yeah. But the BLM came in and this Carpenter was good at it and he squared us all off and now they all have allotments, just like the forest, you see. There are certain areas you can run in and no other. Then you've got to treat those allotments right or you keep losing your numbers.

MB: Were you ever in the military?

Bry: No. No, I never was. I took the examination in the First World War. I had a family of three, and at the examination I was too light. I was very slender in my lifetime. I guess that's why I lived to be eighty-eight. The boys, those big husky rascals, making fun of me for being skinny, are all gone now. So, that skinniness might have helped. I've been very healthy all my life. I've never been sick.

MB: That's good. One special area of interest that I have, that I'm trying to get as much information as I can, is on old legends, superstitions, ghost stories, lost treasure stories, stories just in the area, maybe up in the mountains. I've been told there's a lot of things like that that have happened, maybe strange happenings.

Bry: Well, the story of Diamond Mountain, you've gotten that, of course, haven't you?

MB: No, I've just heard it lately.

Bry: About it being named Diamond Mountain?

MB: Can you tell me that?

Bry: Well, I can tell you, but I can't tell you as accurately as some. Let's see, who could tell that story the best?

MB: Well, I'd love to hear it from you. Maybe you could just give it to me.

Bry: Well, in early times, two men in England, and I can't tell you their names, but anyhow, they decided they'd put a hoax up there. So, they bought a lot of these chipped diamonds, cheap diamonds and brought them into this country. They landed in San Francisco first. Wait, I'm getting ahead of my story. They brought a little sackful of these chipped diamonds from England and brought them into San Francisco and deposited them in a bank there. The bank asked them what was in that sack and they said, "We're not telling what's in the sack." So, it went on day after day and the bank was getting more curious.

They called them in and said, "Tell us what's in this." So, they finally opened it up and here the sack held diamonds, chipped diamonds. "Where'd you get those diamonds?" "Well, a certain place over in Utah." "Well, will you let us know where that is?" No, they wouldn't let anybody know where it is or anything about it.

Well, anyhow, to make a long story short, they finally consented. In the meantime, by the way, they took their diamonds and scattered them around up here on Diamond Mountain by Brown's Park. They put them in ?, they put them in the ground, around. Finally, they said, "Well, I'll tell you, we'll let two men go to prove that we got them in this area." Of course, the bankers were all excited, that's the story. They said, "We'll take two men if you let us take them in there blindfolded so they won't know where they are or where they're going."

So, that's what they did. They took two men in there, blindfolded them into the area and blindfolded them out, then they went back to the bank in San Francisco. Boy, it must have been a terrific excitement. "Yes, the diamonds are there. Here they are. We found them." So, they set up a corporation and Lloyd's took it on. Set up with several million anyhow. So, these boys sold out,

a million apiece or some fabulous sum. They went to investigate this thing and there was a jeweler, finally, who discovered one of them had been polished a little. See, that blew the thing up. They knew they'd been took. These were just planted up there, scattered around.

They got one of the guys and some of their money back, but the other guy they never could get. And that's how it came to be Diamond Mountain.

MB: That's pretty good. Do you know any other stories like that that are around here?

Bry: Well, I know legends. I have a son who is crazy about one. Every time he comes in here he goes into what we call the Potholes up here. The Potholes are just on top on my sheep ranch. The legend there is that there's a log cabin way back in the deep timber and no one has seen it, but that's supposed to be the place where there's two hundred thousand dollars buried in gold, around that cabin. This old fellow. That legend has ruined hours and months of people trying to find that cabin and that gold pot.

MB: Is that on Diamond Mountain?

Bry: That's on Diamond. The other legend about the Brown's Park area, you know, they used to rob the trains and that's where they would come, they outlaws, to this area. The other legend is that they robbed the UP [Union Pacific] and the outlaws brought the \$80,000 in a pot and started along Young Spring's Dugway. Young Spring's Dugway is up on this Taylor Mountain and down into the Green River country. It's a dugway there six miles long, dug by the soldiers when the soldiers used to go through there. Right off from that dugway there's a certain point and they describe it as this pot of gold under a pine tree. That's what the outlaws told them. And people have gone there and hunted and searched and looked and dug. It's just a legend.

MB: Did you ever go look?

Bry: No. I've been by a lot of times, but I don't hold a lot of faith in it. I have a son that thinks he's going to find that. Every time he comes in, he goes up there and looks around for a while.

MB: Does he take a metal detector with him?

Bry: No, he hasn't that I know of.

MB: That might be one way to increase your chances anyway.

Bry: It sure would.

MB: Well, I'll tell you what, we can cut this off right now, if you want to, and maybe as I do more research, I find more areas. The more I look, the more questions I find to ask. Maybe when I get some more accumulated, would you let me come back?

Bry: I'd be glad to tell you anything I can because I'm one of the few left. But I would like to tell you one other one. That is how my father and Billie Bradshaw and Robert Bodily built that first

Upper Canal. They all had homesteads up in that corner. They were the first to build the canal, and all they had, they claim, was just the rawest kind of bread and what deer, they might get a deer occasionally and rabbit, and lived on that kind of stuff. But they dug the canal with shovels, you know, just hand shovels, no scrapers or anything in those days.

They started up where they could take the water out of the creek in the canyon here. For their surveyor, they used the stream of water. Wherever the water would run, they'd make it run as high as they could because my father's farm, it run through it, the first canal, because they couldn't get above it. But that was their surveyor, the water. They'd have this little stream of water. They'd survey with their eyes. They'd dig a ways and see if the water would fall on it. And that's the way the first canal was built.

MB: Is that still in use?

Bry: Still in use. The canal is still there. It may have been changed. It would be changed in certain areas.

**The following is not on the tape, but was written by the interviewer later.

MB: Just out of personal curiosity, have you ever been up Ashley Creek Gorge?

Bry: Yes. You mean up in it?

MB: Yes, up in the Gorge.

Bry: How far up? Up above the spring? It was narrowed at one time. I know all about that spring. It is where our water gushes out, you know. Gushes out the Weber Sand in one spot.

MB: I have just been curious to see how many people have actually been up there. I once walked from Black Canyon all the way out. A friend and I walked it.

Bry: Black Canyon?

MB: You know where Black Canyon comes into Ashley Creek or Black Creek?

Bry: You know where Red Pine Setting is? I have been fishing there a lot. Was it below that?

MB: I think it must be. It was probably ten miles, five or ten miles. But a lot of people I have talked to said they didn't know anyone had walked through the Gorge. A lot of places you had to walk through the water completely because the canyon walls are so high.

Bry: Well, you must have come through in the spring if you walked in the water, because it sinks in the summer. The water sinks in that canyon and comes out at the spring. Did you walk clear down, clear out at the mouth?

MB: Yes, we did. We walked clear into Merkley's Park.

Bry: Did you see the spring where we get our water? Did you go to the spring where we get our water? There wasn't water the full distance of that was there?

MB: No. No, it all stopped after a while, then there was just rock.

Bry: Yeah, and it comes out at the spring. Well, I've never been there. Heavens, no! That's too rough a country for me.

MB: Did there used to be bears in there?

Bry: Bear. I don't know about that. Another curious thing, out of this spring you saw, this spring itself, where it come out of the pipeline, right in the mouth of the canyon?

MB: No.

Bry: Not out of the canyon, where the water comes in, where the spring is?

MB: No, at that point of the trip we weren't paying that much attention because our feet hurt.

Bry: Well, it's all encased anyway, you know. But you could have looked into it. Maybe you could have. It's a marvelous sight. It's the water you are drinking.